

Remarks

Claims 1-7, 10-17, 19-21, 23-25 and 27-37 are pending in the application. Claims 1-7, 10-17, 19-21, 23-25 and 27-37 are rejected. Amendments to the application are shown above. The Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration of the application in view of the amendments and the following remarks.

REJECTIONS UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 1-3, 6-7, 10, 12-15, 17, 19-20, 33 and 34 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ortega (U.S. 6,564,213) and Gross (U.S. 2004/0143564) and Liu (U.S. 2003/0225756). Claims 5, 21, 23-25, 27-28, and 35-36 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ortega and Gross and Liu in view of Van Vleet (U.S. 2006/0112178). Claims 4 and 16 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ortega and Gross and Liu in view of Bowman (U.S. 6,006,225). Claim 29 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ortega and Gross and Liu in view of Van Vleet in view of Chan (U.S. 2006/0129915). Claims 11, 30-32 and 37 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ortega and Gross and Liu in view of Valk (U.S. 2003/0182463).

The Applicant respectfully traverses the instant § 103 rejections.

In the interest of simplifying prosecution of the instant application, the Applicant's reply focuses on the independent claims. Applicant's decision not to address differences between the cited references and every claim limitation of the independent claims or every comment made by the Examiner in regards to the independent claims should not be considered as an admission that Applicant concurs with the Examiner's interpretations and assertions regarding the independent claims.

Also, the patentability of each dependent claim is not necessarily separately addressed in detail. However, Applicant's decision not to address the differences between the cited references and each dependent claim should not be considered as an admission that Applicant concurs with the Examiner's assertions regarding the patentability of the dependent claims over the cited references.

Claims 1-12

Claim 1 as presently amended expressly recites in pertinent part (emphasis added):

"wherein the one or more suggested query refinement options includes at least one of a synonym suggestion for replacing the detected defined query related character pattern in a query or a broadening suggestion for replacing the detected defined query related character pattern in the query to broaden the query."

No new matter has been added to claim 1; the Examiner's attention is directed to at least page 9, lines 22-31, and page 10, lines 8-20, of the Applicant's specification as originally filed.

On page 4 of the instant Office Action, the Examiner acknowledges that Ortega and Gross do not explicitly teach a synonym suggestion or a broadening suggestion for the detected defined query related character pattern of claim 1. The Examiner asserts that Liu teaches this claim limitation. However, the Applicant submits that Liu fails to disclose or suggest "*a synonym suggestion for replacing the detected defined query related character pattern in a query or a broadening suggestion for replacing the detected defined query related character pattern in the query to broaden the query*" as expressly recited in presently amended claim 1.

Liu is directed to internet search using controlled vocabulary data. In Liu, a user selects a term of interest from a controlled vocabulary to be used in an Internet search (Figure 2; paragraphs [0023] and [0027]). A search pane 180 is used for the actual search process (Figure 3; [0030]).

With search pane 180, a user can add (Boolean "OR") alternative terms, such as a Synonym 185, to the search ([0033]). The user's original search term is ORed with the Synonym, the user's original search term is not replaced with the Synonym. In contrast, the Applicant replaces the original search term with a synonym suggestion. Thus, Liu fails to disclose or suggest "*a synonym suggestion for replacing the detected defined query related character pattern in a query*" as expressly claimed by the Applicant.

Also, with search pane 180, a user can add (Boolean "AND") additional features, such as a Broader Term 183, to "improve the precision of the search" ([0032]). Liu provides an example that a search can be refined by ANDing a query term with a Broader Term 183 to reduce the number of search results (i.e., narrow the search) ([0035]). The user's original search term is ANDed with the Broader Term, the user's original search term is not replaced with the Broader Term. In contrast, the Applicant replaces the original search term with a broadening suggestion to provide a broader query. Thus, Liu fails to disclose or suggest "*a broadening suggestion for replacing the detected defined query related character pattern in the query to broaden the query*" as expressly claimed by the Applicant.

Further, one of ordinary skill in the art would not modify Liu to reach the Applicant's claimed invention. Liu does not suggest replacing the user's original search term with another term, but constructs a new search term by combining the user's

original search term with a another term (e.g., [0012]). Liu's search pane 180 in Figure 3 provides only the options of adding terms using AND and OR but provides no option to replace the user's search term with another term.

Thus, the cited references, whether taken singularly or in combination, fail to disclose at least one of the expressly recited limitations of claim 1. Accordingly, claim 1 is not rendered obvious by the cited references. Claims 2-7 and 10-12 are dependent claims and distinguish for at least the same reasons as independent claim 1 in addition to adding further limitations of their own. Therefore, the Applicant respectfully requests that the instant § 103 rejections be withdrawn.

Claims 13-20

Claim 13 as presently amended expressly recites in pertinent part (emphasis added):

"providing a user with one or more query refinement options as the user enters query defining characters, wherein the one or more query refinement options includes at least one of a synonym suggestion for replacing the query defining characters in a query or a broadening suggestion for replacing the query defining characters in the query to broaden the query."

Independent claim 13 distinguishes from the cited references for at least the same reasons as claim 1. Claims 14-17 and 19-20 are dependent claims and distinguish for at least the same reasons as independent claim 13 in addition to adding further limitations of their own. Therefore, the Applicant respectfully requests that the instant § 103 rejections be withdrawn.

Claims 21-24

Claim 21 as presently amended expressly recites in pertinent part (emphasis added):

"providing the user with query refinement options related to the query defining word without requiring the user to provide the explicit indicator of query submission, wherein the query refinement options include at least one of a synonym suggestion for replacing the query defining word in a query or a broadening suggestion for replacing the query defining word in the query to broaden the query."

Independent claim 21 distinguishes from the cited references for at least the same reasons as claim 1. Claims 23-24 are dependent claims and distinguish for at least the same reasons as independent claim 21 in addition to adding further limitations of their own. Therefore, the Applicant respectfully requests that the instant § 103 rejections be withdrawn.

Claims 25-29

Claim 25 as presently amended expressly recites in pertinent part (emphasis added):

"a query refinement option list of user selectable query refinement options that is incrementally updated as a query is entered into the query entry text box without requiring the user to provide the explicit indicator of query submission, wherein the user selectable query refinement options include at least one of a synonym suggestion for replacing the query defining characters in a query or a broadening suggestion for replacing the query defining characters in the query to broaden the query."

Independent claim 25 distinguishes from the cited references for at least the same reasons as claim 1. Claims 27-29 are dependent claims and distinguish for at least the same reasons as independent claim 25 in addition to adding further limitations of their own. Therefore, the Applicant respectfully requests that the instant § 103 rejections be withdrawn.

Claims 30-37

Claim 30 as presently amended expressly recites in pertinent part (emphasis added):

"providing the user with query refinement options related to the detected defined query related character pattern without requiring the user to provide the explicit indicator of query submission, wherein the query refinement options include at least one of a synonym suggestion for replacing the detected defined query related character pattern in a query or a broadening suggestion for replacing the detected defined query related character pattern in the query to broaden the query."

Independent claim 30 distinguishes from the cited references for at least the same reasons as claim 1. Claims 31-37 are dependent claims and distinguish for at least the same reasons as independent claim 30 in addition to adding further limitations of their own. Therefore, the Applicant respectfully requests that the instant § 103 rejections be withdrawn.

CONCLUSION

Accordingly, in view of the above, it is submitted that all rejections and/or objections to the application have been overcome. Based on the foregoing, Applicant respectfully requests that the application be allowed, and that a timely Notice of Allowance be issued in this case. If the Examiner believes that the application is not in condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to call the Applicant's representative at the telephone number listed below.

If this response is not considered timely filed and if a request for an extension of time is otherwise absent, Applicant hereby requests any necessary extension of time. If there is a fee occasioned by this response, including an extension of time fee that is not covered by an enclosed payment, please charge any deficiency to Deposit Account No. 50-0463. Any overpayment may be credited to the same account.

Reply to Final Office Action mailed Nov. 6, 2007
Application Number: 10/749,936
Attorney Docket Number: 306397.01

PATENT

Respectfully submitted,
Microsoft Corporation

Date: January 7, 2008

By: /A. H. Azure/

Anthony H. Azure, Reg. No.: 52,580
Attorney for Applicant
Direct telephone (425) 707-0399
Microsoft Corporation
One Microsoft Way
Redmond WA 98052-6399

CERTIFICATE OF MAILING OR TRANSMISSION
(Under 37 CFR § 1.8(a)) or ELECTRONIC FILING

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being electronically deposited with the USPTO via EFS-Web on the date shown below:

January 7, 2008
Date

/Noemi Tovar/
Noemi Tovar

Reply to Final Office Action mailed Nov. 6, 2007
Application Number: 10/749,936
Attorney Docket Number: 306397.01